



FULICA AUSTRALIS: Gould.



## FULICA AUSTRALIS, *Gould.*

### Australian Coot.

*Fulica Australis*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part XIII. p. 2.

*Mool'-ya-wiñ'-doo* (Ugly Nose), and

*Gid'-jee-broon*, of the Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

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THAT a true Coot should be found to inhabit Australia need not be a matter of surprise, when we have seen how many of the forms hitherto considered to be peculiar to the northern hemisphere are represented in that country; and in no instance is this law more interestingly carried out than in the present, since the two birds are not only identical in form, but are so precisely alike in their habits and general economy, that the admirable accounts of Messrs. Selby, Yarrell, &c., of those of the European bird are equally descriptive of those of the Australian. Its favourite places of resort are the inland waters of the country, which it seldom quits unless to seek for a more abundant supply of food, consisting of aquatic insects, small shelled mollusks, &c. Like our own Coot it constructs a floating nest of decayed aquatic plants, upon which it deposits its eggs and rears its young.

It has often struck me that there are two species of Coot inhabiting Australia, for I possess specimens in my collection exhibiting differences which appear to me to warrant their being considered as distinct, the propriety of which must, however, be confirmed or refuted by future observation: should they ultimately prove to be two species, then the range of the bird here represented will extend over Western and Southern Australia and Van Diemen's Land, and that of the other over New South Wales.

Head and neck black; all the upper surface greyish black; under surface sooty black; irides bright red; bill light bluish grey; crown of the head greenish white; legs and feet french grey.

The figure is of the natural size.